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Unitarians to Oppose U.S. On Attempt at Record Probe

DALLAS, June 2 (AP)—The president of the Unitarian-Universalist Association says the denomination will "resist by all possible means" federal government moves to reopen investigation of its records as a result of publication of the Pentagon Papers.

Dr. Robert N. West, who received a standing ovation from 700 delegates at the UUA's 11th annual convention here Wednesday night, told them:

"It is not our battle alone as we resist this encroachment . . . If I were a Baptist, a Presbyterian or unafilliated with a religious group, I would be as deeply concerned as I am as a Unitarian."

West said the decision by Beacon Press, publishing arm of the 375,000-member denomination, to print the "Sen. Mike Gravel Edition of the Pentagon Papers" was based on two things.

"First, our concern regarding peace and war, and second our interest in the functioning of representative democracy prompted our action. If a church or religious group should not be concerned with peace, then wro should?"

West called the Justice Department's requests for the denomination's records "an unprecedented move by the federal government against a religious group."

"At the moment, the investigation is temporarily stayed and we have not turned over any records," he said. "But twice FBI agents have appeared at 25 Beacon Street (headquarters of the Unitarians in Boston, Mass.) in attempts to serve subpoenas."

The UUA received an injunction to stay the investigation until the Supreme Court rules later this month on the plea for senatorial immunity in connection with Sen. Gravel's release of the Pentagon Papers to Beacon Press.

The Alaska senator is to address the convention here Sunday.